

Transdisciplinary Approaches in Managing a World Heritage Site

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Management of the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn World Heritage Site (WHS) in Switzerland faces a challenge from the interplay of conservation and economic development. Transdisciplinary approaches were used in order to elaborate basic conditions to preserve ecologic stability and inherent natural beauty without preventing sustainable regional development.



Figure 1: Stakeholder discussion in the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn World Heritage Site (Photo by Jungfrauzeitung 2005)

Transdisciplinarity

- Is the result of coordination and cooperation within the scientific community and a debate between research and society at large.
 - Acknowledges that there is not only scientific knowledge but that knowledge exists and is produced in societal fields other than science.
- Transdisciplinarity requires the involvement of all major stakeholders by participatory processes.

An in-depth study of the multi-stakeholder participatory process initiated in the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn WHS revealed **potentials and limitations of transdisciplinary approaches.**

Potentials

- Actively foster local initiatives for sustainable regional development and thereby enhance local people's sense of ownership of the region.
- Address contradictory expectations regarding the issue of conservation and economic development.

- Ascertain key concerns for all involved stakeholders.
- Facilitate debates on the role of key issues and thereby initiate social learning processes and contributing to mutual learning.

Limitations

- Legal norms and framework conditions defined by the state government cannot be negotiated in a regional / local context.
- Possibility of a shift in the existing balance of power between the involved stakeholders.
- Connected to the political and economic dynamics of the geographical and historical contexts.

Conclusion

Preserving global values is dependent on local development, local action, and local actors → transdisciplinary approaches foster management as mutual learning.

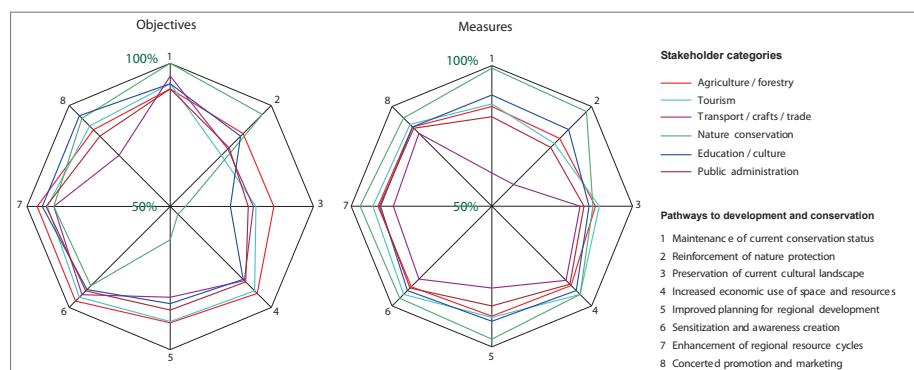


Figure 2: Acceptance of objectives and measures related to the basic orientation of pathways to development and conservation by different stakeholder categories in the case of the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn World Heritage Site (Wiesmann et al. 2005)